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Tokyo 2020 President Seiko Hashimoto (right) and CEO Toshiro Muto attend a press conference on Friday | AFP | P15

QUARANTINE PAIN FOR INDIA AT THE OLYMPICS

A new organisers' manual for the Tokyo Olympics says that everyone from India, including players, must maintain physical distancing for three days. Going by the new rules, athletes from India will be asked to undergo a Covid test for seven consecutive days before leaving for Tokyo. Upon reaching Japan, there is a ban on interacting with athletes from other countries, including training with them.

Will start work on Mekedatu project soon: CM

K'taka welcomes Central NGT order asking Chennai bench to drop proceedings

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @Bengaluru

THE State Government will soon start work on the Mekedatu reservoir project after getting clearances from the authorities in the Union Government, said Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa on Friday.

The National Green Tribunal Principal Bench, New Delhi, in an order on Thursday, directed the NGT Chennai bench to close its proceedings, which were based on a newspaper report that alleged violations of environmental norms in the Mekedatu balancing reservoir project near Kanakapura. The proceedings should be dropped as the issue is before the statutory authority and Supreme Court, it stated. The Karnataka Government had challenged the decision of the NGT bench to take up the issue based on a media report.

"Now that the NGT has greenlighted the project, we will start the work soon. It aims to generate 4,000 MW of power and supply drinking water to Bengaluru. The water will not be diverted for irrigation purposes," Yediyurappa said.

The Tamil Nadu government has been opposing the project for long. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday and requested him to stop the project.

Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai said there are no violations in the project and the government will not allow any injustice to the people of the State in inter-state water disputes. Responding to Stalin's meeting with the PM, Bommai said the case is before the Supreme Court. CONTINUED ON: P7

TN, K'TAKA SHOULD PROTECT SPIRIT OF BROTHERHOOD: HDK

Bengaluru: In a series of tweets, former Karnataka Chief Minister and JDS leader H D Kumaraswamy urged Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin to find an amicable solution to the Cauvery river water dispute. "The need of the hour is to protect the spirit of brotherhood between both the states. Now, let both of us — politicians — too become brothers with respect to the Cauvery issue," he said. P7

BSY supreme as 'coup' ends in whimper

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

Chief Minister B S Yeddiyurappa arrives for the BJP Core Committee at the party office in Bengaluru on Friday | MAHADEVA GADEKAL

THE leadership change issue that rocked Karnataka since Wednesday ended on Friday with the BJP Core Committee deciding that BS Yediyurappa will continue as chief minister undisturbed. But those who created the commotion would not be spared, indicated party national general secretary, Karnataka in-charge, Arun Singh. He said the party will take action against those who are working against it. Without naming them, he said there are only two or three people who are damaging the party and they would be warned.

The leadership issue was raised by senior minister R Ashok at the Core Committee, which was attended by Yediyurappa, Arun Singh, another BJP national general secretary CT Ravi, Union ministers DV Sadananda Gowda and Pralhad Joshi, among others. As all eyes were riveted on Arun Singh, he said, "I have already made it clear that there is no question of leadership change, Yediyurappa will continue." The government, however, looked into specific allegations raised by dissenters. On the phone-tapping charges made by MLA Arvind Bellad, Home Minister Basavraj Bommai ordered a police inquiry.

On MLC H Vishwanath's allegations of 'irregularities' in the Upper Bhadra project, the Water Resources Department issued a clarification suggesting that there was no wrongdoing.

REPORTS: P3

ON THE MAT

Twitter gets an earful, told to respect law of the land

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @New Delhi

REPRESENTATIVES of microblogging site Twitter on Friday got a mouthful from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology for claiming they function on the basis of their own policy. They were told to abide by the laws of the land instead.

Carrying forward the Centre's ongoing confrontation with Twitter, BJP MPs shouted at its representatives, saying the "rule of land is supreme, not your policy."

Twitter was represented by Shagufta Kamran, public policy manager, and Ayushi Kapoor, legal counsel in its deposition before the panel. They landed in hot water while responding to searching questions on whether Twitter follows the rules of the countries it operates in.

BJP members Rajyavardhan Rathore and Nishikant Dubey sought to put the representatives of Twitter on the mat, with sources saying they were extra aggressive in their grilling. "The chairman of the panel, Shashi Tharoor, merely watched as the two BJP MPs shouted at the duo, who mostly maintained silence or replied briefly," sources said. Opposition MPs, too, questioned the "brazenness of the representatives for saying they have their own policy", sources said.

On its failure to make appointments in line with the Information and Technology Act's rules, the duo reiterated it was because of the pandemic's constrinits. They refrained from committing themselves to any specific timeline to abide by the new IT rules, despite being prodded by the panel to do so, sources said. P9

Slash oil tax, says worried panel advising PM

ANURADHA SHUKLA @New Delhi

Timely supply side policy measures with regard to petrol and diesel, edible oil and pulses, among others, would be critical to bring about a durable softening of price pressures —RBI

AMID growing disquiet over high fuel prices, the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council (PMEAC) has suggested to the government to take a political call on taxing oil, warning it could otherwise build inflationary pressure, and its spill-over impact would dampen consumer sentiment and dampen recovery.

"Petrol and diesel price cannot be used as cash cow forever. Some political intervention is required as it will finally dampen the consumer spending and will delay the recovery. A delay in intervention will prolong the recovery process. Focus needs to be to promote growth of industry and jobs," a senior member of the PMEAC told this newspaper. The member added that recovery will be fragmented if private consumption is not stepped up.

Similar concerns were raised recently by the Reserve Bank of India, as gleaned from the minutes of its monetary policy meet. "The rising trajectory of international commodity prices, especially of crude, together with logistics costs, pose upside risks to the inflation outlook. Excise duties, cess and taxes imposed by the Centre and States need to be adjusted in a coordinated manner to contain input cost pressures emanating from petrol and diesel prices," the minutes said.

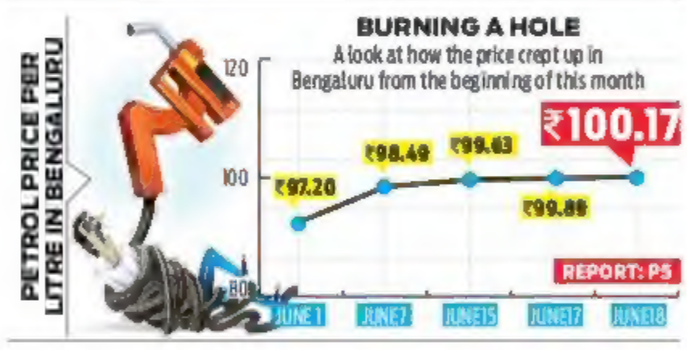
"Timely supply side policy measures with regard to petrol and diesel, edible oil and pulses, among others, would be critical to bring about a durable softening of price pressures," the RBI added.

High fuel price and food cost pushed up retail inflation, measured by the consumer price index (CPI), to 6.3% in May, overshooting the RBI highest band of 6%.

Even the wholesale price inflation has reached 12.94, highest since 2013, pushed mainly by fuel and power inflation, which was up by 37.6% in May. Experts claim this will make things difficult for the RBI. Petrol and diesel prices are at all-time highs though crude oil fell nearly 2% from its highest level this year on June 17 to $72.23.

Further jump

Petrol and diesel prices were on Friday increased again by 27 paise and 28 paise, raising their cost in Mumbai to ₹103.08 and ₹95.14 per litre



Flying Sikh Milkha Singh touches the finish line

ENS/AGENCIES
@Chennai/New Delhi

LEGENDARY Indian sprinter Milkha Singh passed away after a month-long battle with Covid-19 in Chandigarh on Friday. The end came at 11.30 pm, hios family said. He was 91. The 'Flying Sikh' had suddenly developed fever on Thursday night and his oxygen saturation levels dipped.

One of India's greatest athletes won the Asian Games gold four times. He was the 1958 Commonwealth Games champion but his greatest performance was the fourth-place finish in the 400 m final of the 1960 Rome Olympics. He was bestowed the Padma Shri. MORE ON: P15

EXPRESS NEWS

Bail order can't be precedent, says SC

The Supreme Court on Friday observed that the Delhi High Court's order granting bail to three activists, arrested in connection with Delhi riots, will not set a precedent. P10

NATIONWIDE	JUNE 17	JUNE 18
Fresh cases	67,208	62,480
Recoveries	1,03,570	88,977
Deaths	2,330	1,587
KARNATAKA	**JUNE 17**	**JUNE 18**
Fresh cases	5,983	5,783
Recoveries	10,685	15,290
Deaths	138	168

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